

CYRUS H. GORDON

FURTHER NOTES ON THE HAGIA TRIADA TABLET NO. 31

HT 31 (Fig. 1)¹ was the natural starting-place for the decipherment of Minoan², because it is a quasi-bilingual, with pictograms of vessels which provide clues to the meanings of the words spelled out over them³. Roberta J. Richard (Kadmos 13, 1974, 6—8) has illuminated the problematic parts of the text that had defied explanation previously. What made possible her important contribution is the strong Aramaic component of Minoan.

HT 31

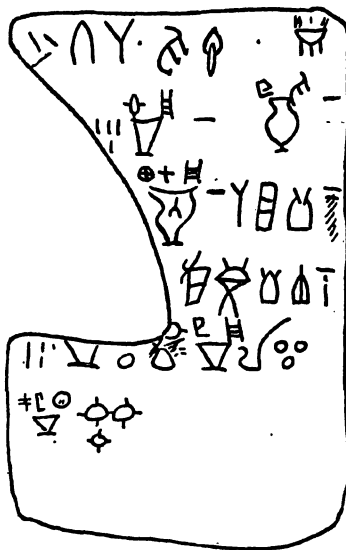


Fig. 1

The newest confirmation of the Aramaic affinities of Minoan comes from the wine⁴ jar from Epano Zakro which ends thus: . *a re ma re na* .

¹ References to texts and signs are according to W. C. Brice, *Inscriptions in the Minoan Linear Script of Class A*, Oxford 1961.

² C. H. Gordon, *Notes on Minoan Linear A*, *Antiquity* 31, 1956, 124—125, Paragraph 5.

³ C. H. Gordon, *Evidence for the Minoan Language*, Ventnor 1966, 26.

⁴ As noted in *Evidence for the Minoan Language*, 28—29, the Minoan word for wine is

*ti ti kw*⁵. Titiku is a name or title attested at Hagia Triada⁶, while *ma-re-na* is equivalent to Aramaic *mārē-nā*, 'our lord'. The prefix *a-re* corresponds to the Northwest Semitic preposition אֶל, 'to, for'. Thus the dedicatory formula states that the wine was an offering "to our lord, Titiku".

In HT 31:3, the *ka-ro-pà* vessels are described as being *sa-ya-ma-na*, which Mrs. Richard explains as 'silver'; *saym-* is an international word for 'silver' used in Aramaic. This fits the parallel expression in HT 31:4; namely, *ki-de-ma-wi-na* for which the meaning 'gold' had been proposed⁷. The suffixes of *ki-de-ma-wi-na* and *sa-ya-ma-na* are noteworthy, for it is specifically in Aramaic that *-in(a)* and *-ān(a)* designate the plural for nouns and adjectives; *-in* is masculine and *-ān* is feminine.

The two opening words of HT 31 (*mi-ti-sa . pu-ko*) indicate that the tablet is an order to issue commodities from the storage depot. The first syllable *mi-* is the familiar preposition 'from'; *ti-sa* = Aramaic טִישָׁא with a range of meanings like 'secrecy, hiding, protection, reserve'. In addition to the references cited by Mrs. Richard, we may add Mandaic *tiša* = טִישָׁא, defined as 'secrecy' by E. S. Drower and R. Macuch, Mandaic Dictionary, Oxford 1963, 179. Mrs. Richard correctly analyzes *pu-ko* as Aramaic *puqū*, the *peal* imperative masculine plural from the Aramaic root *npq*, 'to go out'. The regular meaning of the *peal* is 'to go out' and the sense here is "go out!" (rather than "bring out!" as Mrs. Richard suggests). The style calls for addressing the merchandise (rather than the personnel in charge of the depot), so that the vessels are told, "go out of the storehouse!". This stylistic feature is attested at Ugarit, where the goods are said to 'go out' (rather than to be 'brought out') in passages like: *tl̄t . d yša* (UT 90:1), "*tl̄t*-metal which has gone out" and (UT 2100:20) *šb̄c . šr . šmn* (21) *d . l . yša . bt . mlk*, "17 (measures) of oil which did not go out from the house of the king"⁸.

ya-ne. Since a town-name *āl_{ya-na}* in the Ugaritic tablets (see J. Nougayrol, Palais royal d'Ugarit, Paris 1970, 148 n. 1; 163 n. 5) is also written *āl_{GESTIN-na}* (i.e., WINE-na), the Ugaritic word for "wine" was pronounced *yan-*. This establishes a Ugaritic-Minoan isogloss (see M. Astour *apud* H. Hoffner (ed.), Orient and Occident, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973, 23 n. 76).

⁵ The groups of signs in the Epano Zakro text have been drawn and reproduced in J. Raison and M. Pope, Index du Linéaire A, Rome 1971, 33, 245.

⁶ HT 35:1.

⁷ Kadmos 8, 1969, 131—133.

⁸ In Ugaritic literature, jars and vases are treated as divine personages in text 51:VI:53—54. Cp. Iliad 18:373—377 for automated tripods that go to the assembly of the gods, and afterwards return home.

It is at last possible to give a plausible translation of an entire Minoan tablet insofar as it is preserved. Refinements will be forthcoming, but the following will stand in essence:

<i>mi-ti-sa . pu-ko .</i>	Lc 45	Go out from the depot! [x] tri-
[x]+4	Lc 63 10 Lc 64 10	Pods, 10 <i>qa-pà</i> vessels, 10 <i>su-pu</i> vessels,
[]	Lc 65 10 <i>sa-ya-ma-na</i>	[], 10 silver pitchers,
[]	[] <i>ki-de-ma-wi-na</i>	[x] golden [vases],
? ?	L'9 [x+]/300 Lc 66 300	[x+] 300 y-vessels, 300 bowls,
L 67 3000		3000 cups.

Semitic identifications for all of the vessel names in HT 31 have been proposed; several are highly probable. The material need not be recapitulated here⁹. What should be noted at this time are the implications of the Aramaic component.

The names of the letters of the Greek alphabet are, in many cases, not what modern scholars would call Phoenician, but Aramaic with the postpositive article *-ā*; thus alpha (vs. Phoenician aleph), beta (vs. Phoenician bet), gamma (vs. Phoenician gimme), delta (vs. Phoenician dalet), and similarly with other Greek letter-names ending in *-a*.

The Semitic word for 'bull' is *shōr* in Phoenician and Hebrew, *thōr* in Ugaritic and Arabic, but *tōr* in Aramaic; Greek *taur-os* goes with the Aramaic. This loan has special significance because El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon is called 'The Bull'¹⁰. Minoan Zeus takes the form of a bull when he abducts Europa, and bull rites and legends are prominent in Minoan culture.

The Aramaic component of Minoan confirms the continuity of the Minoan language into Eteocretan, where the Aramaic factor is particularly strong¹¹.

⁹ See the index of Minoan words and names in *Evidence for the Minoan Language*, 38—39.

¹⁰ UT 19.2664.

¹¹ C. H. Gordon, *The Greek Unilinguals from Praesos and Dreros and Their Bearing on Eteocretan and Minoan*, *Proceedings of the Third International Cretological Congress*, Section A, Athens 1973, 97—103.